

Those who attended the CHA- AGM in July will recall Dr. Norman Yan's presentation on the importance of calcium in our lakes. The following is a summary of key statements that he made:

- All living things need calcium and, typically, are composed of approximately five per cent calcium on a dry weight basis.
- Daphnia, a group of tiny crustaceans better known as water fleas, won't survive without a certain level of calcium in the water.
- When a lake's calcium level reaches less than 1.4 milligrams of calcium per litre, Daphnia will die.
- Water fleas act as algae filters in lakes and are food for fish.
- Daphnia are like the little aquatic canaries in the coal mine.
- Daphnia are at the bottom of the aquatic food chain. When they die off, it sets up a chain reaction that can have an adverse effect on all higher-level organisms in the lake.
- Trees also need calcium (up to 20% dry weight on some maples).
- Trees that are cut down should not be removed from the property, as this will deplete the calcium.
- Spreading wood ash (after a tree is burned) will help to maintain calcium levels on your property.

To its credit the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) has been using the water samples submitted by lake volunteers (as part of the Lake Partner Program) to analyse the calcium levels. This has been going on since 2008 and now there is sufficient information to see how lakes in Haliburton are faring.